



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PERSONNEL AND LABOR RELATIONS
WASHINGTON DC 20420**

SEP 30 1994

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-94-14

**POSITION CLASSIFICATION GUIDANCE
FOR
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**

1. For several years, VA officials have expressed frustration with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) position classification standard for the Personnel Management Series, GS-201, which is more than twenty-five years old. OPM had begun a review of the GS-201 standard over two years ago, and the review identified the need for radical changes to the standard. However, a number of factors caused OPM to defer any further action on the revision of the standard. In some situations, the General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) issued in April 1993 has been found to permit classification decisions more consistent with the needs of the organization. However, finding it critical to VA operations that we have more relevant criteria for evaluating Human Resources Manager (HRM) positions, the Office of Human Resources Management, in cooperation with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), embarked on an effort to supplement the OPM standard with guidance for evaluating VA HRM positions. The guidance augments, but does not replace, the basic OPM issued standard. For this reason, the guidance was developed within the format of the existing OPM standard to ensure that classification actions based on the VA guidance could withstand any external review which would require application of the basic standard.

2. The attached guidance contains interpretive information and explanatory material to assist users in the application of grade level criteria in the aforementioned standards to HRM positions in VA, and elaborates upon those aspects of the work that were found to increase the complexity, difficulty and responsibility of administering human resources management programs within VA. Subject-matter experts from VBA and VHA, and many HRMs in the field participated heavily in its development and review. Since we began developing the guidance, unprecedented changes have begun in the field of human resources, and the guidance does not yet reflect all of them. For that reason, this guide should be viewed as an interim measure, which will need revision as the wave of change continues in the Federal human resources community and in VA. However, it serves the immediate need of providing guidance for classifying VA HRM positions within the framework of recently delegated personnel management authorities. We

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believe that it is a better tool to work with than the OPM standard alone. As the goals established by the National Performance Review are implemented and we redefine the role of the HRMs in the Department, we will revise and update this guidance.

3. The guidance itself includes a number of features that we think will be of benefit to VA HRMs, such as:

- o A method for counting the entire serviced population, including part-time and intermittent workers; a more equitable way to adjust for populations that fall between ranges in the size of workforce served;
- o Quantitative measures of environmental elements, with more points being assigned to those elements which impact heavily upon the work of VA HRMs, and a summary point to rating conversion chart to simplify the resulting determination;
- o Descriptions of what constitute exemplary personnel management practices in VA, and how to go about crediting this element in the grade determination process;
- o A summary grade conversion chart to assist the user in combining the factor and element ratings to arrive at a final grade determination;
- o A recommended format for position descriptions that ensures coverage of all pertinent grade determining aspects of the work; and
- o Optional, pre-classified standard position descriptions to expedite the classification of typical HRM positions.

4. If, in applying the GS-201 and the GSSG standards to these positions, different grade levels are assessed, the user should apply mixed-grade principles, which will result in assignment of the highest grade level creditable to the position (i.e., for duties performed 25% or more of the time which require materially higher Knowledges, Skills and Abilities).

5. VA Circular 00-93-9, "Title Change to Human Resources Management," dated May 18, 1993, authorized the usage of "Chief, Human Resources Management Service/Division" as an organizational title for field facility Personnel Officers. However, the title to be used for classification purposes remains "Personnel Officer" and will continue to be used in block #15 of OF-8 as prescribed by OPM. The organizational title, "Chief, Human Resources Management Service/Division," should be used in block #16 of the position description.

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6. We have developed several Standard Position Descriptions (SPDs) as attachments to cover HRM work situations found at some VA facilities. These SPDs are intended to serve primarily as a convenience to users of the guide so that it would not be necessary for all users to invest time and effort in describing and evaluating what may be typical work situations shared in common by HRMs at many VA facilities. Use of these SPDs is optional, not required. If your review determines that the work assigned to and performed by the HRM at your facility substantially matches the intent and content of an SPD, you may use an SPD (with appropriate modifications) as the position description of record. Individual position descriptions may also be developed when deemed necessary using the SPDs as a guide.


7. Requests for classification action on all VBA HRM positions should be forwarded to the VA Central Office Personnel Assistance Staff (20A2) together with a revised position description, evaluation report, and current organizational and functional charts.

8. Proposed classification actions on all VHA HRM positions should be forwarded to the Regional Director (RD) for a position management review, prior to final classification by the facility Director, together with a revised position description, evaluation report, and current organizational and functional charts. However, requests to classify HRM positions that have been evaluated locally at Level 3 of Factor II must be submitted to the RD in accordance with the guidance on page A-13 in this HRML and VHA Directive 10-94-008.

9. Courtesy copies of all proposed reclassification actions affecting HRM positions in VBA and VHA should be submitted simultaneously to the attention of 05A, CO Office of Human Resources Management.

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10. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to this project, especially the VBA and VHA subject matter experts and the many HRMs and management officials who reviewed and commented on drafts of the Human Resources Management Letter. Questions regarding this issuance should be referred to Ruby Washington-Huling, Position Management and Classification Service, (057), at (202) 273-4974.



Ronald E. Cowles
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Human Resources Management

Attachments

Distribution: Per VAF 3-7225
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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-94-14
Attachment A

Guidance for Application of Part I of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) position classification standard for Personnel Officer, GS-201

For the convenience of the user, this guidance follows the format of the OPM standard.

Factor I - PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT

Element 1: Level of Authority and Responsibility

Primary Policy Level

The term "primary policy level" denotes the policy making authority normally associated with a department or agency headquarters.

Secondary Policy Level

The term "secondary policy level" normally applies to the organizational echelon next below the department or agency level, provided certain criteria are met. The term is reserved for those organizations that meet the following criteria: (1) the organizational echelon next below, and reporting directly to, the "primary policy level"; (2) need for delegation of substantial policy making responsibility; and (3) independence in developing policies, program goals and activities. For more detailed guidance on what distinguishes the "secondary policy level" from the "primary policy level" above and the "operating level" below, refer to pages 9-11 in the OPM classification standard for the Personnel Management Series, GS-201.

Operating Level

The term "operating level" denotes the absence of the types of policy-setting independence and responsibilities included in the terms "primary policy level" and "secondary policy level". Operating level programs typically have "substantially full delegation of personnel authority (for recruitment, placement, classification, employee development, employee-management relations, etc.), and exercise delegated authority to develop and implement human resources management policies and procedures for use at the facility level to fit local conditions and needs.

All VA medical center (VAMC), VBA regional office (VARO), medical and regional office center (VAMROC), and independent outpatient clinic (OPC) Human Resources Manager (HRM) positions with full delegated personnel management authority are deemed to meet this level.

Element 2: Size of Work Force Served

The OPM standard denotes four approximate workforce ranges, the lower three of which could apply to Human Resources Management programs at VA facilities:

Category	Size of workforce	Gap Between Ranges
Small	350-750	751-999
Medium	1,000-5,000	5001-7499
Moderately Large	7,500-15,000	

Almost all Regional Offices/Independent Outpatient Clinics/VAMROCs currently fall under or within the small range (350-750) in terms of size of workforce served. VHA medical centers currently fall within the small (350-750) to medium (1,000-5000) ranges in this category. Positions that fall below the small range should be credited as small.

When the workforce served by the Human Resources Management program at a facility falls within the gap between ranges, the next higher level may be credited if the difference is equal to or more than half of the gap between ranges. For example, if a facility has 876 employees, medium may be credited as the size of workforce served since this figure represents one half of the difference between levels.

Illustration: 876 employees (falls within the gap between small-medium)

Gap = 250	750
Half the Gap = 125	+ 125
	875 or more - Credit Medium

In determining the size of the work force for this purpose, count all full-time, part-time, and intermittent positions and employees of the facility for which the HRM provides any type of meaningful services (e.g., recruitment and placement, pay and benefits, counseling, etc.), regardless of actual hours worked.

Element 3: Other Environmental Elements

The OPM standard describes nine sub-elements, but allows for consideration of other sub-elements which could have a significant impact on the facility's human resources management program. To assist the user in determining their relative importance to VA human resources management programs, each of the sub-elements described has been assigned a point value, as indicated below. Where the work situation falls between levels, an intervening level/point value should be assigned, as indicated in the summary point table on page 11.

a. Functional coverage of the program

This sub-element relates to the program functions for which the HRM is responsible. Human resources management programs most characteristically involve five specialized program functions (1) placement and staffing, (2) position classification and/or pay administration, (3) employee relations, (4) labor-management relations, (5) employee development and training, and related clerical and administrative functions.

-Limited -3 points

Three functions are present, or four or all five of the functions are present but no more than three are actively implemented in most of their major aspects (i.e., one or more of the functions are implemented only in limited or basic aspects).

This level does not currently exist within properly conducted VA human resources management programs.

-Substantial - 9 points

Five of the traditional human resources management program areas, plus the clerical and administrative functions are present and are actively implemented in most of their major aspects.

Most medical centers, independent outpatient clinics and regional offices can be credited with this level.

-Exceptional -15 points

SITUATION 1

Broadened functional coverage may occur when additional responsibilities such as the following are assigned to HRMs: (a) occupational worker compensation program; (b) responsibility for active and comprehensive and community-type services, such as housing, recreational facilities, schools, community organizations, clubs, etc.; (c) responsibility for providing personnel management functions and services in a situation which involves both the regular Civil Service system and a separate personnel management system, such as Title 38 or the Federal Wage System (FWS) which is applicable to a substantial number and proportion of the employees in the organization.

Credit for broadened functional coverage may be given when any of the above lettered items is present.

OR

SITUATION 2

Some HRMs within VBA and VHA have expanded their programs beyond the normal functional areas common to their position. Examples of programs typical of this level include those where the Human Resource Manager has established and coordinates programs, such as: (1) off-campus credited and non-credited college courses conducted at the facility for employees; (2) day care centers; (3) delegated Total Quality Improvement (TQI) program responsibilities for the facility; (4) responsibility for being lead or host agency in the performance of Federal Wage Surveys; (5) DOD/VA sharing agreements, (6) personnel health program; and (7) management analysis program for the facility.

Credit for expanded coverage may be given to those HRMs with primary responsibility for at least 2 of the 7 programs described above, or for comparable programs if present.

b. Variety and technical complexity of occupations served

This sub-element addresses the variety of occupations with which the program must deal, and the complexity of problems presented by these occupations in terms of functional human resources operations, e.g., problems in recruiting; in evaluation of qualifications; in the identification of career ladders; in compensation; in training and development; in maintenance of promotional opportunities, etc. Occupational variety is represented, in general terms, by the approximate number of occupational series present in the organization. However, the technical complexity of occupations is significant to the extent the occupations actually create human resources management problems and require greater depth of understanding and judgment; and the degree to which the problems which they present have been met with thoughtful and constructive responses, and have led to positive program plans and actions by the human resources management office.

Occupational variety represents the approximate number of occupational series present in the organization. Occupational complexity is expressed and measured in terms of the extent to which the occupations involved are specific, tangible, and easily understood, or require a substantial depth and breadth of knowledge, insight and judgment for adequate understanding. The occupational complexity of the organization as a whole, rather than the presence or absence of a few positions with given characteristics, is the basis for evaluating this element. (A reduction in the number of occupational series due to series consolidation or broad banding would not, for example, affect the underlying occupational complexity of the organization). The degrees of occupational complexity and variety are:

Limited — 3 points

Up to 50 primarily administrative or FWS occupations are serviced. The bulk of the workforce is in occupations with fairly well established and readily understood work content and characterized by duties and responsibilities not requiring in-depth

classification insight or judgment, and the qualifications of individuals can be readily determined. Illustrative of this level are the normal range of administrative occupations.

This level is most typical of the occupational variety found at many VBA regional offices and VHA independent outpatient clinics.

Moderate -- 6 points

Approximately 100 different occupations, including professional, technical and administrative positions. This level is characterized by a moderate range of occupations involving work of a mental, judgmental, public contact, or coordinative nature, or which call for rather specialized skills.

This level is appropriate for independent outpatient clinics or regional offices that exceed the "limited" level.

Substantial-- 9 points

Approximately 150 different occupations, including a mixture of Title 38 employees; professional, technical and administrative positions; and a substantial population of FWS employees. This level is characterized by a substantial range of occupations involving work of a mental, judgmental, public contact, or coordinative nature, or which call for rather specialized skills. These are occupations for which job content and progressions of levels are well established and for which there are precedents in terms of patterns of qualifying experience, recognized recruiting sources, recognized career ladders, etc. Administrative occupations where the work content is fairly clearly established; inspection and investigative occupations; various technical occupations; and professional occupations which render fairly well-defined services are characteristic of this level.

Many medical centers and VAMROCs as well as multi-mission ROs fall within this level of occupational variety and complexity.

Exceptional--15 points

Typically, in addition to the population described in the preceding level, there are a very large number of different occupations, involving a great many highly dissimilar occupational families and groups, including large numbers of professional and allied health care providers and Title 38 employees. A very substantial proportion of the employees in the organization (e.g., one-third or more) are in occupations which present substantially above average technical problems. These are typically occupations which involve highly complex work of a mental, judgmental, public contact nature and/or which involve highly specialized and uncommon work skills. Illustrative of this level are positions engaged in research and development work in scientific, professional, and technical fields, and positions involving very high level administrative, coordinative, public relations, and managerial work.

This work situation is considered typical of the health care setting within medium size, affiliated VAMCs and VAMROCs.

c. Organizational complexity and stability

Organizations differ in terms of their complexity and stability. It is substantially more difficult to operate an effective human resource program in a very complex and unstable organization.

Moderate—2 points

The organization is relatively stable. A relatively simple organization is characterized by division into a limited number of components whose activities are clearly distinguishable - usually because they involve clearly different subject or functional areas. Responsibilities are not so intermeshed that they cannot be fairly readily determined and identified. The philosophy of the organization remains unchanged for relatively long periods of time, with major organizational and program changes occurring not more than perhaps once in five years, or longer.

Most ROs and outpatient clinics would be categorized at this level.

Substantial—3 points

This level represents complex organizations such as non-affiliated, small medical centers that are typically subdivided into various components, with very closely intermeshed responsibilities and functions.

Very Substantial—4 points

Complex organizations such as affiliated VAMCs located in major metropolitan areas are typically subdivided into many components, with very closely intermeshed responsibilities and functions. Major decisions and actions are often matters of joint action and concern between the clinical and administrative sides of the house, and searching analysis is required to clearly delineate new functions and responsibilities. Changes of function involving sweeping realignments of duties, positions and personnel; or major changes of philosophy involving extensive program reorientation and changes in delegations of authority occur every several years. Human resources activities are complicated by the many organizational elements which may have similar but somewhat varying requirements. Some medium size affiliated VAMCs would meet this level.

d. Servicing organizations under separate management controls

Some human resources management offices are responsible for servicing activities which operate under the control of different management elements of the total organization. The

following are examples of organizations for which human resources management services typically provide support in VA:

Substantial 6 points	Substantial (1 of the 4) 6 points
OPC*	REGIONAL OFFICE
Canteen	Area Office
	District Counsel
	Veterans Centers
	Inspector General

Exceptional (3 of the 6) 10 points	Exceptional (3 of the 6) 10 points	Exceptional (3 of the 7) 10 points
VAMROC	MEDICAL CENTER	REGIONAL OFFICE
District Counsel	Canteen Service	Area Office
Canteen Service	National Cemetery	Sector Site Centers
Veterans Center	DOD Partnerships	District Counsel
Inspector General	Regional Director	Veterans Centers
DOD Partnerships	Veterans Centers	Inspector General
VBA/VHA Serviced	RMEC**	Veterans Benefits Academy
		Office of Public Affairs

*With the exception of Canteen Service, Outpatient Clinics (OPCs) are not usually involved in servicing organizations under separate management controls.

**Regional Medical Educational Center

e. Intermingling of work force

In some instances the human resources management program involves an intermingling of workers under entirely different personnel systems. This is more evident in a VAMROC or medical center than a regional office.

Moderate (1 of the 2) 4 points	Very substantial (3 of the 4) 8 points	Exceptional (7 of the 9) 10 points	Exceptional (7 of the 9) 10 points
RO	OPC	MEDICAL CENTER	VAMROC
Title 5	Title 5	Title 5	Title 5
FWS/WG	Title 38	Title 38	Title 38
	Hybrid Title 38	Hybrid Title 38	Hybrid Title 38
	FWS/WG	FWS/WG	FWS/WG

		NAF*	NAF
		P&H**	P&H
		Residents	Residents
		Interns	Interns
		Consultants/Attendings	Consultants/Attendings

*Non-appropriated fund (NAF)

**Purchase and hire (P&H)

f. Dispersion

Some organizations, such as dual facility medical centers, have a significant proportion of their staff in subordinate offices and duty stations located in separate geographical locations. Such dispersion may create problems in requiring special communication efforts and special visits to maintain contact with all elements of the workforce, maintain morale, limit turnover, and assure that good supervisory and human resources management practices are followed. To meet a given level in the chart below, the organization must have all listed or comparable elements of dispersion.

Moderate	Moderate	Very Substantial
4 points	4 points	8 points
RO	OPC	VAMROC
Area office outstationed employees	subordinate clinics at separate sites	Veterans center
Vet. centers		National Cemetery
		Substance Abuse Clinic

Very Substantial	Exceptional
8 points	10 points
MEDICAL CENTER	MEDICAL CENTER
subordinate clinics at separate sites	two division medical facility
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Clinics	Veterans center
Substance Abuse Clinic	Alcohol & Drug Abuse Clinics
	Outpatient clinics
	National Cemetery

g. Isolation

When a facility is at a location which is remote from the labor markets from which it must draw its workforce, or if the location is unattractive even though not remote from centers of population, the location may impose serious human resources management problems. Such problems may require special measures with respect to recruiting, transportation, pay, development of special training plans, etc.

Substantial--3 points

The facility is located in a rural setting, remote from population centers, stores, housing and public transportation, and is in a labor market which imposes serious problems in recruiting for occupations unique to a medical care or benefit environment.

Exceptional--5 points

The facility is located in an urban metropolitan or suburban setting, but due to insurmountable pay disparities, a high cost of living, significant environmental hazards, harsh climate, transportation problems, lack of affordable housing, crime or comparable circumstances it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified program and support employees. Facilities located outside the continental United States could also experience extreme difficulty in recruiting from within their limited labor market.

h. Missions which place exceptional demands on the human resources management program

This sub-element covers situations that place exceptional demands on the provision of personnel services to customers.

Substantial-- 9 points

Provision of services to veterans, disabled veterans and their families under conditions of anxiety and stress meets this level. Such conditions are typically found in ROs and OPCs where veterans go to obtain benefits and medical care.

Very Substantial-- 12 points

This level is representative of a human resources management program at a non-affiliated VAMC or VAMROC. These are health care environments in which the facility operates on a 24 hour a day, seven days per week basis. Such environments place complex and difficult demands on the human resources management program.

Exceptional--15 points

Representative of this level is the human resources management program at an affiliated VAMC or VAMROC, a health care environment in which the facility operates on a 24 hour a day, seven days per week basis. The medical center is typically affiliated with one or more schools of medicine. This affiliation complicates the HRM's job in terms of expanding contacts with school officials and staff, adds logistics concerns regarding the movement of staff between the facilities, and increases the need for communication with the workforce. Complications arise from the need to coordinate overall resident/intern employment and planning with the medical school. Logistically, the influx of medical students and residents, and the presence of consultant and attending physicians who supervise them or provide consultative services creates additional problems in human resources management. Large general and medical research staffs and large numbers of medical specialties and special medical programs are typical of affiliated medical centers. This puts additional emphasis on the human resources management program in terms of the recruitment and retention of large numbers of scarce health care professionals.

i. Complexity imposed by labor relations activities

This sub-element is concerned with the variety and complexity of problems affecting the human resources program as a result of obligations to negotiate with labor organizations, diligently implement the provisions of negotiated agreements, and to participate in the labor-management partnership process. The variety and complexity of labor relations activities are significant to the extent that they require of the HRM a greater degree of knowledge, judgment, and program coordination than in the past. Also significant is the degree to which the human resources office has developed a program of positive action to establish and maintain meaningful bilateral relationships and to meet problems with constructive responses.

Substantial--6 points

Facilities whose employees are represented by one labor union meet this level.

Exceptional--10 points

Those facilities (VHA or VBA) serving employees in multiple bargaining units represented by multiple labor organizations that represent most of the facility's employee population may encounter extreme difficulty and complexity in the labor relations area. These situations, together with the increased emphasis which the partnership process places on securing union input at early stages of decision making, results in a need for greater knowledge, judgment, sensitivity and program coordination skill than was required in more traditional labor/management settings.

j. Additional technical complexity and difficulty associated with participation in model or test programs

Exceptional--5 points

HRMs at facilities designated in the past as Management Efficiency Pilot (MEP)/Total Quality Improvement (TQI) sites or currently as "Reinvention Labs" are involved in new and different issues and programs that place exceptional demands on the incumbent and the service since they are operating outside conventional human resources management policies, procedures and precedents. This setting requires substantially greater creativity and adaptability to integrate the model program. Furthermore, many of the procedures "invented" in this organizational milieu may eventually become standard operating human resources management policy VA wide. HRMs actively participating in the design, development and evaluation of such test programs meet the description of this level.

SUMMARY POINT TABLE for SUB-ELEMENTS a.-j.

A copy of this table may be used to record the assignment of levels and points to the above sub-element.

sub-element	limited	moderate	substantial	very subst.	exceptional
a.	3	6	9	12	15
b.	3	6	9	12	15
c.	1	2	3	4	5
d.	2	4	6	8	10
e.	2	4	6	8	10
f.	2	4	6	8	10
g.	1	2	3	4	5
h.	3	6	9	12	15
i.	2	4	6	8	10
j.	1	2	3	4	5

Value of Element 3:

Convert the total points assigned under sub-elements a. through j. above using the following Point-to-Rating Conversion Chart:

86-100	EXCEPTIONAL
73-85	VERY SUBSTANTIAL
58-72	SUBSTANTIAL
44-57	MODERATE
43 <	LIMITED

Factor II-- OPERATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE PERSONNEL PROGRAM

Level 1-Standard Technical Operation- At this level the interest is in providing and maintaining a human resources management program that provides the basic requirements within an existing legal regulatory framework.

Most human resources management programs within the VA exceed this level.

Level 2-Positive Management-Oriented Operation- At this level the human resources management program has progressed beyond the basic regulatory and procedural requirements typical of Level 1. The HRM maintains a proactive approach to meeting the goals of the organization by developing, adapting and implementing, within the existing legal and regulatory framework, human resources management procedures and operating instructions tailored to the specific requirements of the organization, programs and customers served.

Most VA facilities provide a mission-driven human resources management program. Therefore, HRMs at such facilities are appropriately credited at Level 2.

Level 3-Outstanding Management-Oriented Operation

This level of operation is recognized as outstanding among VA human resources management programs, and is recognized as such by the facility director and/or by the users of the service. The HRM acts as a change agent by providing advice, assistance, training, and presentations on unique human resources management initiatives and exemplary practices that have saved dollars or reduced employment levels and resulted in greater satisfaction on the part of customers served.

The human resources management function is an integral part of management. This is evidenced by the HRM's participation in strategic planning for the facility, as a consultant and full partner with top management. Human resources management programs and products are carefully developed and well executed to support the facility's mission in terms of productivity, efficiency, and improvements identified through this process.

An active human resources management program that provides a cohesive working partnership with all local union partners by promoting an atmosphere of trust and open communications which enables them to resolve problems and work toward the common goal of accomplishing the facility's mission.

The HRM develops creative/innovative means to: provide significant reductions in organizational worker compensation program (OWCP) cost; return of formerly injured employees to duty; other initiatives for successful recruitment of shortage category health care professionals; position classification/position management initiatives that indicate streamlined, cost effective

utilization of dollars and employees; creative pay initiatives that implement legislative pay flexibilities and departmental policy; right sizing human resources with consideration of long-range mission needs; performance management and recognition activities that identify and acknowledge the truly deserving and differentiate between the exceptional and the average; and implement merit system principles.

Results of these efforts indicate a human resources management program that has received accolades from the HRM's superiors at the field facility level for implementation of exemplary practices or unique human resources management initiatives that have greatly contributed to the accomplishment of the facility's mission in a cost effective manner.

The HRM serves on a regular and recurring basis as a resource person on local strategic/steering/resources committees, task forces, etc.

Effectiveness of the human resources management program is self-identified by the HRM through both descriptive and reactive measures. Descriptive measures include ratios, costs and timeliness of activities; reactive measures include issues or problems both identified and resolved.

METHOD FOR EVALUATING LEVEL 3 of FACTOR 2:

Nominations submitted for consideration of assignment of Level 3 should consist of the following: current position description in format previously described in this document; current organizational and functional charts for the Human Resources Management Service/Division; position evaluation report, which includes an in-depth analysis and comparison of duties and responsibilities with the applicable classification standard/guide used in the classification of the position; the immediate supervisor's comments relative to the accuracy of the position description and the merits of the request for consideration; and a list of accomplishments in any of the functional areas. Additionally, each nomination must contain data/statistics clearly portraying the positive impact of practices listed in any of the respective human resources management functional areas.

THE FOLLOWING, WHILE NOT ALL INCLUSIVE, ARE EXAMPLES OF EXEMPLARY PRACTICES IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONAL PROGRAMS THAT MAY BE IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL:

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS, EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

-initiatives to provide information or guidance on the appraisal process to both supervisors and employees, such as material which provides quick answers to most often asked questions about the performance management process, including the philosophy behind performance management, that is easily understandable and useful, as attested to by users (i.e., desk guide).

-innovative or multi-dimensional systems for obtaining information from which to assess individual performance (e.g., 360 degree appraisal).

-use of innovative forms of non monetary awards to recognize high level performance when budgetary constraints preclude payment of meaningful cash performance awards.

-development of computer applications which replace manual record keeping systems in the incentive awards and employee suggestion areas, and which facilitate data retrieval and improve statistical reports.

-development of a "Manager's Desk Guide" to the Employee Assistance Program to help supervisors manage situations in which mental or physical conditions are affecting an employee's performance or conduct. The use of the "Guide" as a reference enables the supervisor to document poor performance; hold counseling sessions; make referrals to the Employee Assistance Program; make reasonable accommodations for employees with problems associated with alcohol and substance abuse; and take necessary disciplinary action.

-development of an automated system that provides advice and guidance to supervisors on how to deal with probationary employees who are having problems, e.g., time and attendance. The program should enhance the supervisor's performance, supplement supervisory training, and provide a uniform system for handling problems.

-development of creative/alternative discipline programs to more effectively manage increasing caseloads, reduce administrative costs, and rehabilitate employees for productive service. For example, an employee can waive statutory entitlements under 5 U.S.C. 7503 (b), 5 USC. 7513 (b), and 5 U.S.C. 7543 (b) and all appeal, grievance, and complaint rights, and accept non-traditional penalties, such as community service or forfeiture of annual leave. Alternative discipline is not to be used when the only appropriate penalty is removal.

-development of an automated system that provides each employee with a personalized letter with an estimate of projected Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) earnings based on the employee's personal data. Computations could be presented in a spreadsheet program that portrays estimates using the employee's current salary in today's dollars, based on

contributions of 5 or 10 percent. In addition, a comparison with TSP earnings based on the employee's present TSP participation level (0 to 10 percent) could also be provided. This allows employees to readily see the advantages of participation and how their savings goals can be met.

- development of an automated program that provides periodic reports which identify employees within 5 to 15 years of retirement age and the creation of retirement seminars for those employees. Speakers could include attorneys, tax accountants, financial planners, representatives from Social Security Administration, and professional social workers. This allows employees to begin financial retirement planning that would benefit them in the future.

- significant reductions in OWCP costs and return of long term job-injured employees to duty.

- human resources management staff that provides information and completed (typed) TSP, FEGLI, and other benefit forms to employees, thus requiring only the employee's signature and date.

PAY ADMINISTRATION

- implementation of innovative and proactive pay initiatives/reforms under appropriate authority.

- introduction of computer systems and programs to evaluate/monitor the accuracy and appropriateness of ongoing pay entitlements in specific programs such as physician and dentist special pay and nurse locality pay.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

- training conducted by in-house staff is recognized by agency officials and outside organizations as being of high quality and receives commendations and awards or is used by other facilities.

- development of training programs that uses local VA or non-VA talent to accomplish training with a minimal expenditure of funds.

- serves as an expert internal consultant on training and training-related issues including such things as budgetary decisions, downsizing, inauguration of new programs, etc.

RECRUITMENT

- creation of an exit interview database which allows for automation of the process of gathering, storing, and analyzing data received through exit interviews that could be used

to identify programs which need improvement, plan recruitment and retention strategies, and improve situations causing employee morale problems.

- development of creative/innovative ways to fill positions that may remain vacant due to budget restrictions, etc. For example, selection of 5 employees already on staff for 20% of their time through a competitive process for a vacant position you are unable to fill because of ceiling restriction. The applicants selected are provided appropriate training (e.g., computer) and are called upon on to work on projects as they come up.

- development of an interactive automated program which performs the mechanical processes of a reduction in force (RIF). For example, a program that would identify placements for Round 1 and possible placement options for Round 2. The system, which can be re-run to accommodate changes, will produce RIF letters, reemployment priority lists, repromotion eligible lists, EEO impact reports, annotated retention registers, severance pay computations, and a variety of other reports.

CLASSIFICATION AND POSITION MANAGEMENT

- development of a comprehensive position management manual which advises managers/supervisors how to identify, prevent, and eliminate organizational fragmentation, excessive layering, inefficient job design, outmoded work methods, and inappropriate spans of controls.

- development of a "Manager's Desk Guide to the Classification Program" for use as a reference guide by managers/supervisors in terms of the classification/job grading of positions in their service/division/unit. The guide might include information concerning OPM standards and guides governing the classification of positions; any agency guides that have been published; applicable position reports; the average grade of similar positions (if any) at the station/region/area and in the agency; classification/job grading history for the occupations e.g., consistency reviews, appeals/formal advisories, OPM/VACO case listings; etc.

- automation (computerization) of job descriptions and/or evaluations.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

- establishment of a joint union-management problem solving process the purpose of which is to review, in early stages, issues that have potential for disputes. The objective is to resolve issues at an early stage thereby preventing formal complaints/ULPs, etc.

- development of a human resources management handbook for union representatives. The Handbook could contain Title 5 USC references, information pertaining to all functional areas of human resources management.

- development of human resources management training classes for union representatives to foster a better understanding of human resources regulations, procedures, etc.

SUMMARY GRADE CONVERSION CHART

Factor I, El. 1	Factor I, El. 2	Factor I, El. 3	Factor II	Grade Level
auth. & resp.	workforce size	environ. elem.		
oper. level - full	medium	exceptional	Level 2	GS-201-14
oper. level - full	medium	substantial to very substantial	Level 3	GS-201-14
oper. level - full	medium	substantial	Level 2	GS-201-13
oper. level - full	small	very substantial	Level 3	GS-201-13
oper. level - full	small	very substantial	Level 2	GS-201-12*

*Any position that meets the definition of HRM will be classified no lower than GS-12, in accordance with Part II of the GS-201 standard.

POSITION DESCRIPTION FORMAT - HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

I. DUTY STATEMENT

II-SUPERVISORY/MANAGERIAL FACTORS

-PROGRAM SCOPE AND EFFECT

-ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

-SUPERVISORY AND MANAGERIAL AUTHORITY EXERCISED

-PERSONAL CONTACTS

a. NATURE OF CONTACTS

b. PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

-DIFFICULTY OF TYPICAL WORK DIRECTED

-OTHER CONDITIONS

III. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FACTORS

FACTOR 1 - THE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT

ELEMENT 1-LEVEL OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

ELEMENT 2-SIZE OF WORK FORCE SERVED

ELEMENT 3. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

A. FUNCTIONAL COVERAGE OF THE PROGRAM

B. VARIETY AND TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY OF OCCUPATIONS SERVED

C. ORGANIZATIONAL COMPLEXITY AND STABILITY

D. SERVICING ORGANIZATIONS UNDER SEPARATE MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

E. INTERMINGLING OF WORK FORCES

F. DISPERSION

G. ISOLATION

H. MISSIONS WHICH PLACE EXCEPTIONAL DEMANDS ON THE PERSONNEL PROGRAM

I. COMPLEXITY IMPOSED BY LABOR RELATIONS

J. ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY AND DIFFICULTY ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPATION IN MODEL OR TEST PROGRAMS

FACTOR 2 - OPERATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE PERSONNEL PROGRAM

III. OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-94-14
Attachment B

**Supplemental Guidance on Application of the OPM GENERAL SCHEDULE
SUPERVISORY GUIDE to VBA and VHA HRM positions***

*The following guidance, which is specific to VA HRM positions, is to be applied in conjunction with guidance in VA HRML 05-93-24.

The OPM General Schedule Supervisory Guide (GSSG) provides evaluation criteria for determining the General Schedule (GS) grade level of supervisory positions that meet the minimum requirements for coverage. Therefore, the following guidance may be applied to determine the GS grade level of supervisory duties and related managerial responsibilities performed by Human Resources Manager (HRM) positions when such duties and responsibilities:

- require accomplishment of work through combined technical and administrative direction of others; and
- constitute a major duty occupying at least 25% of the position's time; and
- meet at least the lowest level of Factor 3 in the Office of Personnel Management's GSSG.

The GSSG uses a point-factor approach, with six factors designed specifically for the evaluation of supervisory positions. Under each factor there are several factor level definitions which are assigned specific point values. The point values for all levels are fixed and no interpolation or extrapolation of them is permitted. To determine the proper grade level, add the points accumulated under all the factors and convert the total to a GS grade using the conversion chart provided in the Guide. The following interpretation of these six factors relates specifically to the evaluation of HRM positions within the VA.

Factor 1 - Program Scope and Effect

This factor assesses the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the human resources management program and the work directed, including the organizational and geographical coverage. It also assesses the impact, both within and outside of the immediate organization.

In applying this factor, consider all human resources management functional areas, projects, and work assignments which the HRM technically and administratively directs, including those accomplished through subordinate supervisors and employees.

Level 1-2 - 350 points

HRMs who serve smaller facilities such as independent outpatient clinics and hospitals with few or no research or university affiliations are normally credited at Level 1-2.

Level 1-3 - 550 points

HRMs in Regional Offices/VAMROCs who provide benefits services to the total population of their State or location are normally credited at Level 1-3. Also, at this level are HRMs at large VA medical centers which serve large veteran populations in major metropolitan areas such as West Los Angeles, Atlanta, Baltimore, Cleveland, Denver, San Francisco, St. Louis, New Orleans. Geographic areas, populations, or cities of comparable size would also be credited under this level.

Factor 2 - Organizational Setting

This factor considers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher levels of management.

Level 2-2 - 250 points

Factor Level 2-2 is creditable to HRM positions within VHA that are accountable directly to an Associate Director.

Level 2-3 - 350 points

Factor Level 2-3 is creditable to HRM positions within VBA that are accountable to a Regional Office (RO) Director, who is at the SES level, or to an Assistant Director, GS-15, who is a full assistant to the Director.

Factor 3 - Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities which are exercised on a recurring basis.

Level 3-2 - 450 points

HRMs in VBA ROs would be credited at this level in smaller offices where the RO organizational structure does not consist of subordinate sections headed by GSSG supervisors. This level may also be creditable to HRMs in smaller VHA medical centers and OPCs with similar organizational structures.

Level 3-3 - 775 points

HRMs who exercise nearly all of the authorities described at level 3-2c and perform at least 8 of the supervisory authorities and responsibilities outlined under level 3-3 (b) are credited at level 3-3. Normally, HRMs whose organizations are divided into subordinate

sections with supervisors are credited with #1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, & 15. This organizational structure is most typical of human resources management services that serve medium to large medical centers. Facilities meeting 3-3 (b) described in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide may also be credited at this level.

Factor 4 - Personal Contacts

This is a two part factor which assesses the nature and the purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities.

Subfactor 4A - Nature of Contacts

Level 4A-2 - 50 points

HRMs normally have frequent, regular and recurring contacts with all levels of management within the medical center or regional office and employees. Contacts are also made with groups outside of the facility; however, they may not be on a frequent or regular and recurring basis. This is most typical of Level 4A-2.

Level 4A-3 - 75 points

HRMs located at "Reinvention Labs" work in an environment that could support crediting of Level 4A-3. For example, they have frequent contacts with high ranking managers within Central Office, other Federal agencies, and private industry firms.

Subfactor 4B - Purpose of Contacts

Level 4B-2 - 75 points

Most HRMs, on a daily basis, are confronted with situations described in the Guide at Level 4B-2.

Level 4B-3 - 100 points

Contacts typical of an HRM located in a facility designated as a "Reinvention Lab" normally involve justification and negotiation concerning the establishment of prototype programs/units.

Factor 5 - Difficulty of Typical Work Directed

This factor measures the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organization (s) directed, as well as other line, staff, or contracted work for which the supervisor has technical or oversight responsibility, either directly or through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or others.